

Pennyhooks Farm Trust's Response to Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)

At Pennyhooks we understand that our students have significant and complex needs and that the behaviour we see in them stems from neurobiological differences in the brain.

We understand that Autism is at the **cognitive** level *not* at the **behavioural** level and that behavioural symptoms are influenced by neurobiological factors and are often beyond the control of our students.

We are, therefore, careful to be mindful not of what ***we intend in our interactions with our students***, but of how ***our behaviour is experienced and interpreted*** by them.

We understand that:

- their **experience** is likely to be very different from ours.
- they may not be able to respond or give communicative feedback in a conventional way.
- they may also only be able to consider their own needs in any given moment, not ours.

This means, to engage in a meaningful way with our students, we work hard, at all times, to do what is right for them rather than for ourselves (with the exception of where our safety is compromised).

To do this successfully **we are**:

- prepared to be open minded
- prepared to listen and learn (from them and from each other)
- prepared to problem solve
- prepared to reflect on our practice

At Pennyhooks we acknowledge that being with and working with people with ASC can be very challenging and we take care to follow these principles of interaction:

WATCH - Be observant/listen

WAIT - Do I need to intervene (or not)?

WONDER - What is going on?